NATO Trains Crews in Anti-Submarine Warfare off Norway

Commodore Bradley Peats of the Royal Canadian Navy, who is commanding ships from NATO Standing Maritime Group 1. *ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY*

Ships and aircraft participating in one NATO's signature maritime exercises head to the waters of the high north for Dynamic Mongoose 2021 (DYMO 21). The exercise, sponsored by NATO's Allied Maritime Command (MARCOM), based at Northwood, U.K, will take place between June 29 and July 9.

Vice Admiral Didier Piaton of the French navy, the MARCOM deputy commander, said MARCOM is organizing planning and conducting the exercise in the maritime joint environment. "It's important to our nations and our navies to maintain and enhance our collective skills in maritime warfare," he said.

Dynamic Mongoose exercises are held annually in the North Atlantic, in which NATO trains and practices anti-submarine warfare (ASW) skills under various circumstances. MARCOM also leads the annual ASW exercise Dynamic Manta in the Mediterranean. Together, they represent NATO'S premier deep water, high-end ASW and anti-surface warfare exercises.

Ships from NATO Standing Maritime Group 1 (SNMG1), under the command of Commodore Bradley Peats, Royal Canadian Navy, will participate along with submarines from the U.S. and Norway. Peats commands SNMG1 ships from Canada, Denmark, Netherlands, Norway and the U.K. from his flagship, HMCS Halifax (FFH 330).

Dynamic Mongoose exercises "will improve our surface, subsurface and maritime air forces abilities to work together effectively and seamlessly while enhancing our joint

warfighting capabilities and proficiency in the surface and sub-surface threat subsurface domain," said Peats. "These efforts pay dividends in times of crisis and conflict and proves NATO's collective capability to respond in a timely and effective manner to potential threats to maritime security, stability and commerce in the region."

Peats, speaking to reporters today, said ASW requires complex and close coordination between surface ships, submarines, maritime helicopters and maritime patrol aircraft to effectively find, track, and, if necessary, neutralize submarines. "Each type of asset brings its own unique capabilities to the table. For example, surface ships have a long endurance and can host anti-submarine warfare capable maritime helicopters. Fixed-wing patrol aircraft can cover long distances and wide areas relatively quickly. Submarines are excellent and covert searches and tracking," he said.

Aviation units from Canada, Germany, U.K., Norway, U.S. and the Netherlands are participating. Rotary winged aircraft will operate from the ships and land-based maritime patrol aircraft will operate from Lossiemouth, U.K., Keflavik, Iceland, and Andoya, Norway.

Representing the host nation, Chief of the Royal Norwegian Navy Rear Adm. Rune Andersen said allied maritime presence in the North Atlantic is very welcomed. "NATO is the cornerstone for Norwegian security. Our ability to operate together is vital for our security. Supporting allied training and activity in and around Norway is a key task for the Norwegian armed forces."

Andersen said the significance of exercises like Dynamic Mongoose has grown with the increased military activity in the North Atlantic. "Anti-submarine warfare is a complex undertaking. The undersea domain is a challenging operating environment. It requires good command and control and coordination between surface and air units. Operators at sea

and in the air need advanced exercises to train, practice and to improve and maintain their skills."

Rear Adm. Andrew Burcher, who is Commander Submarines NATO and the officer-in-charge of the exercise, said an in-stride debriefing team has been established, as it has for several previous Dynamic Mongoose and Dynamic Manta exercises, to provide real-time feedback to the assets that are at sea. The team is supported by the NATO Centre for Maritime Research and Experimentation in La Spezia, Italy, to gather data and evaluate what the different assets are doing, collating that information and then providing feedback on how the units they are performing.

"It's a real value to the units participating in the exercise to get real-time feedback that they can then put into practice for the next case-ex or serial that they do," Burcher said. "With each subsequent exercise we've increased the level of detail and information provided through this methodology. It gives us a significant advantage."

Burcher said it's all part of a process of continuous improvement. "We make improvements, and with the next iteration we can we make improvements on top of that, and part of that process is practice. Each time we have an exercise like Dynamic Mongoose, we practice that capability, and demonstrate it in the environment where it's going to be utilized."

Reporters wanted to know if the exercise was an attempt to send a message to Russia. Piaton said Dynamic Mongoose, like all exercises in NATO, is conducted in a transparent and unprovocative manner with a declared defensive posture. "NATO's daily mission is deterrence. We're here to train our crews and make sure our deterrence is credible."

Andersen noted the annual exercise has been taking place for many years, and is occurring within Norway's EEZ. "It's quite

far from Russia, actually," he said.

According to NATO spokesman Cmdr. S. Korhan Zorlu of the Turkish navy, appropriate COVID 19 protocols are being observed afloat and ashore.